

REMARKS

Claims 1-12 have been examined on their merits.

Applicants submit that the amendments to claims 1, 3, 11 and 12 do not require any further search by the Examiner, and reduce issues for appeal. Entry and consideration of the amendments to claims 1, 3, 11 and 12 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-12 are all the claims presently pending in the application.

1. Claims 1, 2, 11 and 12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as allegedly being anticipated by Neilsen (U.S. Patent No. 5,870,548). Applicants traverse the § 102(e) rejection of claims 1, 2, 11 and 12 for at least the reasons discussed below.

With respect to claim 1, Neilsen fails to teach or suggest that modification of the e-mail message body is blocked if at least one addressee of a plurality of addressees has viewed the e-mail message body. In the Response to Arguments section, the Patent Office argues that Neilsen determines if addressees have not seen the e-mail message body and modifies the unseen e-mail message body if an addressee has not yet viewed the message body. However, Nielsen does not specifically prohibit the modification of the e-mail message body if at least one addressee has viewed the e-mail message body. Neilsen allows an addressee, who has viewed an e-mail message body and subsequently receives a modification message, to allow the modification of the e-mail message body, even if other addressees have viewed the e-mail message body. Furthermore, the Patent Office does not address the multiple addressee recitation of independent claim 1.

Based on the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that Neilsen fails to teach or suggest all of the claimed elements as arranged in claim 1. Applicants submit that claim 1 is allowable, and further submit that claim 2 is allowable as well, at least by virtue of its dependency from claim 1. Thus, Applicants respectfully request that the Patent Office reconsider and withdraw the § 102(e) rejection of claims 1 and 2.

With respect to independent claims 11 and 12, Applicants submit that claims 11 and 12 are allowable for at least reasons analogous to those discussed above with respect to claim 1. Thus, Applicants submit that claims 11 and 12 is allowable, and respectfully request that the Patent Office reconsider and withdraw the § 102(e) rejection of claims 11 and 12.

2. Claims 3-10 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Neilsen in view of Uchida *et al.* (U.S. Patent No. 6,327,610). Applicants traverse the § 103(a) rejection of claims 3-10 for at least the reasons discussed below.

The Patent Office acknowledges that Neilsen fails to teach or suggest the use of an access code for accessing an e-mail body. The Patent Office alleges that Uchida *et al.* contains the necessary disclosure to overcome the acknowledged deficiencies of Neilsen.

With respect to independent claim 3, the combination of Neilsen and Uchida *et al.* fails to teach or suggest that modification of the e-mail message body is blocked if at least one addressee of a plurality of addressees has viewed the e-mail message body. As noted above with respect to claims 1, Nielsen does not specifically prohibit the modification of the e-mail message body if at least one addressee has viewed the e-mail message body. Instead, Neilsen allows an addressee,

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who has viewed an e-mail message body and subsequently receives a modification message, to allow the modification of the e-mail message body, even if other addressees have viewed the e-mail message body. Furthermore, the Patent Office does not address the multiple addressee recitation of independent claim 3. Thus, Applicants submit that the Patent Office cannot fulfill the “all limitations” prong of a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

Applicants submit that one of skill in the art would not be motivated to combine Neilsen with Uchida *et al.* Both Neilsen and Uchida *et al.* lack any teaching about the desirability of prohibiting the modification of the e-mail message body if at least one addressee has viewed the e-mail message body. Applicants submit that the Patent Office cannot fulfill the motivation prong of a *prima facie* case of obviousness.

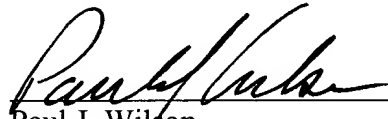
Based on the foregoing reasons, Applicants submit that the combination of Neilsen and Uchida *et al.* fails to teach or suggest all of the claimed elements as arranged in claim 3. Thus, Applicants submit that claim 3 is allowable, and further submit that claims 4-10 are allowable as well, at least by virtue of their dependency from claim 3. Applicants respectfully request that the Patent Office reconsider and withdraw the § 103(a) rejection of claims 3-10.

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In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: May 5, 2005